THE OBSERVER.

BY BEATRICE IRONSIDE.

THE FRIEND OF SOCRATES, THE FRIEND OF PLATO,
BUT ABOVE ALL, THE FRIEND OF TRUTH.

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FOR THE OBSERVER.

OBSERVATIONS ON THEORY.

(Concluded from our last.)

We find extremes of all kinds are dangerous, and as generally observed "they meet." Hence it may be a question, whether an unrestrained licence to canvass opinions political, sacred and physical, be not productive of as many evils as the limited power possessed in various nations at different periods. Such has of late been the rage for theorizing as to give birth to volumes of palpable absurd ideas, many of which are destructive of virtue, dangerous to our lives, and injurious to our fortunes. And all of them tend forcibly to shew the caprices of the mind, and convince us that the love of novelty is with most a stronger principle than the search of truth. This theorizing mania is highly prejudicial to every department of knowledge. The moral world has strongly felt its baleful influence. These pseudo-moralizers, who by the vigour of genius, and unceasing application have arrived almost to the achme of human knowledge, but not of common sense, have prostituted their talents in inventing systems which are exploded without effort, and at which the reason of a child cannot but revolt. "The equality of mental endowments," "The organic perfectibility of man," "The indefinite prolongation of human life," "The future extinction of sensual passion," and a long catalogue of such absurdities have been advanced with all imaginable gravity. This manja did not stop here; great and learned personages, wandering in the intricacies of metaphysicks, obliged the world with what is called the *primary* and *secondary* qualities of bodies. They held that the latter had but a mental or ideal existence; hence, that the vegetable world had not their robes of varied hues, except when before the eye; that their various odours had no existence but in the presence of olfactory organs which are affected by them; that there was no heat in fire nor coldness in ice; with many other such bidlings of the imagination. These opinions diffused themselves like wildfire, many embracing them without knowing

their meaning, or being at all conscious that the whole philosophy hung upon a mere verbal distinction ; for instead of giving to the words colour, odour, heat, &c. their proper significations, they attributed a meaning importing *effect* and not cause ; and we all know that there is no *sensation* of heat in fire, odour in a rose or colour in a tulip.

After the secondary qualities of bodies were established as having a mere mental existence the primary met with the same fate.

What says bishop Berkley (2) is *figure, magnitude* und *solidity* but mere perceptions, and are not these perceptions mere ideas? Hence it is that these philosophers would have all God's material creation to be a mere fiction, a total illusion, and to have no more substantiality than the phantasies of the imagination or the visions of a diseased brain. Besides the indecency of supposing that the God of nature has made the universe one scene of delusion, the theory is so preposterous as to be its suicide, without the adscititious aid of logical argument. But the consummation of this *farcical* endeavor to *ouste* the creation of substance was reserved for Mr. Hume, who by the same mode of arguing, contended for the non-existence of spirit, so that we are now to understand the universe to be composed of nothing but ideas. Quere, must not the definition of the word *idea* be altered.

The evils resulting from the establishment of such ridiculous doctrines are too palpable to need comment.

But this rage for theory and refinement has by no means confined itself to moral writers. The same unhappy mania has to a great degree possessed the political and physiological world. The latter of which, especially the medical faculty, have been as distinguished for the wildness of their notions as any other class of writers. When I took up my pen my principal object was to mention the evils necessarily resulting from that fondness for theory, so lavishly indulged in by medical authors, but I've unavoidably digressed from my subject, in mentioning the absurdities to which the same disposition leads moral and metaphysical writers.

The desire of discovering something new, and of being thought wiser than our forefathers, though frequently productive of the most valuable specimens of genius, has nevertheless been creative of incalculable evil to the science of medicine. The contrariety of opinions, and the infinitude of theories advanced to account for medical phenomena, cannot but create doubts as to

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(2) I would not wish here in the slightest degree, to call in question the virtuous motives of the amiable and learned bishop of Cloyne. His errors proceeded from an unhappy fondness for subtlety and refinement, and not from the impious views which guided the pens of most of those metaphysical writers whose productions it is to be feared have neither added virtue or sense to the common stock.

the certainty and importance of the science; conjectures as to its real foundation in nature will arise, and a fatal mistrust of the physician's capability of administering relief, results as the necessary consequence.

A science which concerns our tenderest interests, on which our life and happiness so greatly depends, should be placed above the reach of pamphlet theorists, and the *learned sons* of medicine should set a good example by paying the utmost deference to the opinions of their predecessors, and never presume to make an innovation, unless founded on the broad basis of reason or experiment.

It has been too much the practice of theorists to condemn important opinions and systems, for their own ends, and to dwell on errors (or what they conceive to be such) without suggesting adequate means for remedying them. This illiberality is characteristick of a narrow mind, and exposes the sandy foundation which supports their visionary fabricks. I would not be understood to maintain that those alone are permitted to find fault who can substitute truth for error, or even more plausible systems, but I wish to express my disapprobation of that host of narrow-minded authors, who disregarding opinions consecrated on the altar of time, and sanctioned by the ordeal of experiment, presumptiously assail them with the tools of ridicule, the brass of impudence, and the petty parade of sophistry.

But what are we to say, when men distinguished for their learning, forgetting the importance of their profession, give vent to the wildest notions, contaminate the purest methods of reasoning, and raise a "baseless fabrick" of unmeaning distinctions which employ the first four years of a student's pursuit, in exploring its intricacies, and removing the useless mass of distinctions without differences. Had we not better petition them to make tooth-picks of their quills, than to waste their ink and paper in indulging an inclination so fatal to their profession?

A serious want of uniformity (in consequence of the contrariety of opinion among medical men, according as they adopt the various theories of the day) is necessarily introduced into practice, and that science, which of all others ought to be the most distinguished for its certainty, is perhaps of all others the most involved in theory and doubt. The necessary result of this difference of opinion among the faculty is, that the quack stalks forth in the pride of confidence as the compeer with the most distinguished of the profession. The patient droops for the want of faith in his medical attendant,

"For who shall judge when doctors disagree,"

And at last this noble, this honorable employment lingers into a sordid and ignoble quackery.

These practical evils are the regular consequence of theoretic imperfections, and those imperfections take their rise from

the mistaken idea, that every medical writer must produce something new, and that where originality is not to be found, genius is wanting, hence the *nosological* refinements of Cullen, Sagorus, Vogelius, &c. the ætiological subtilties of Brown and Darwin, the more simple, but equally speculative doctrines of Rush. What must be the confusion of the student, who in wandering from the pages of the venerable father of medicine to those of Cullen should find many of his leading doctrines contradicted, these again denied by Brown, and Brown's in turn condemned by others, is he not apt to view the science with a suspicious eye, and accordingly to doubt its real foundation in nature?

Might not this thirst after novelty in medical writers be considerably checked, by subjecting their works to the severe but impartial criticism of men distinguished for their learning and virtue? This could be productive of no evil, but every possible good. Writers would be much more cautious as to what they send into the world, and readers could be previously advertised of the merit of the production. Similar institutions have been established in every part of Europe, but there have been radical defects in all, since none have obtained the desired end. One grand essential is, that they should be composed of men of strict probity, impartiality and extensive erudition; for though the brilliant delineations of the pencil of fancy on the canvass of a heated imagination is very apt to delude the majority of mankind, yet they cannot but fade from the cool, dispassionate and correct investigation of the philosopher, whose microscopic eye (in search of truth) is not to be dazzled by the splendour of imagery, or the plausibility of sophistry. Until the *Darwinian* mania subsides, till truth is sought for in the road of experiment and observation, it is impossible that the science of medicine can be placed upon a respectable and permanent foundation. And as in history the most trivial *facts* are infinitely more valuable than the most pleasing illusions of fiction, so also, in science, is one established truth more to be appreciated than volumes of ill-founded theory. I am therefore strongly inclined to think with *Grant*, that "The explaining, correcting and confirming the observations of our predecessors is more useful, and as honorable as *hunting* after new discoveries, of which the *truely learned* will find but very few, whatever the *ignorant* may imagine."

EUGENIO.

For the Observer.

REMARKS ON QUARANTINES

Continued from p. 348.)

It is certainly not without reason that the impatience of the reader should be deprecated, when objects are pursued which are apparently unconnected with the avowed purpose of these

communications. It will be doubtless generally believed that the natural history of insects can have no relation to quarantines. In the sequel it will be shewn that there are many circumstances in the œconomy of these little animals which are highly interesting, especially to man, and that upon these circumstances, in a great measure, depend the benefits to be promised from the adoption of a system which all acknowledge to be attended with many disadvantages. In the mean time, many curious facts will be adduced, that must be, at least, amusing.

In the last number, the attention of the reader was solicited to that species of fly termed Ichneumon. This name was given to it, because the medium through which it derived its existence was the internal parts of other animals, and in so far it resembled the Ichneumon of Egypt which was fabulously supposed, to creep into the stomach of the Crocodile when asleep, and to devour the entrails of that tremendous animal, but which in truth is only serviceable in seeking for and destroying its eggs. In this way it becomes a more formidable enemy to that object of general terror than it would be in attacking an individual.

The Ichneumon flies are armed with two strong teeth, and have four wings. Their body is divided, the two parts being connected by a small tube, and their anten tennæ or feelers are long, and continually in motion, which has induced some naturalists to call them Vibrants. This unceasing motion of their feelers will readily distinguish them from all other flies.

It would be useless, and scarcely possible to trace the varieties of this tribe; they are almost innumerable, and of different sizes from the largest to the minutest insect. The female differs from the male in being furnished with an instrument which is attached to the posterior end of the body. This is composed of a sheath, and a species of dart which is so constructed as to operate like a wimble, and often of such prodigious strength as to penetrate the nests of other insects, however secured in the interior parts of the hardest wood, or made of mortar, that emulates stones of the firmest texture; thus, as Mr. Marsham observes, they are prepared to attack the progeny of other insects; in whatever recess, whether in the egg or larva state. All are subjected to receive, and to nourish at the expence of their own existence, the eggs and consequent larva of some of the ichneumon tribe. Some of these parasites deposit one egg some many at the same time in the body of a full grown caterpillar; but whether there be one or many, it always happens, as has been already stated, that the organs necessary to life are spared. This is consonant to that wisdom by which every thing is safely conducted to its destined end. Were the Ichneumon larva undistinguishingly to feed upon every part of the bodies they inhabit, they would not only deprive themselves of the requisite food until they have attained the growth necessary to their me-

tamorphose, but must perish from their want of a covering whilst they are in the chrysalis state. For many caterpillars, particularly those of the cabbage, having their bodies full charged with their enemies live, notwithstanding, to their term of change, and previously spin a silken or cotton web that includes the brood to which they are sacrificed, and thus they provide for the safety of a tribe of which their race is to become a future victim. It is curious to observe an ichneumon fluttering over the body of a large caterpillar. It frequently stops, and thrusts its dart into the sides and back of the sufferer, which although it writhes, evidently in torture, and uses every means to escape, yet finds no means of avoiding the reiterated and fatal strokes; at every one an egg is deposited which it must hatch at the expense of life. There is the fullest reason to believe that it is wholly ignorant of the source of its afflictions.... It would indeed be a dreadful addition to its torments, were the ichneumons obvious to their senses. To be enabled to witness the approach of such savages would be still more terrible than the wounds they are doomed to endure. The Supreme Being has never unnecessarily enhanced the calamities which are inseparable from life.

We have seen that nature gives to the female ichneumon an instrument fitted to pierce the hardest bodies containing the aliments suited to their young; she has given them also an extraordinary intelligence by which they discover the insects proper for their food, however carefully concealed; they know where to find the caterpillars of every description, the inhabitants of the galls, of peltry, and even of spiders glued in their holes: Their webs, contrived with so much ingenuity and strength, and which proves so formidable to all other winged insects, are no guarantee against the invasion of our ichneumons. They do indeed abundantly avenge the cause of all the other classes, and essentially serve to restrain the excessive multiplication of an order of beings who spread havock amongst all others that come within their power. There are ichneumons that attack them in every condition, whether as eggs, as larva, when full grown, and when dead. Their carcases serve for many as a receptacle for the eggs of their enemy. There is here a wonderful display of sagacity. An ichneumon comparatively small, attacks a large spider, pierces it with its dart, until it dies; then drags the body to its nest, and there incloses it in such a manner as to obviate the possibility of putrefaction; or in other words, the invasion of other insects, and when the eggs of the ichneumon are hatched, the proper food is there prepared for the sustenance of the young larva. In short, as has been already asserted, there is not a species of insect, large or small, even that of the puceron, that has not its ichneumon, and even the ichneumons themselves are not allowed to spare each other. They appear to be

the common levellers of all, and to serve as the most efficient instrument for restraining the excessive multiplication of, perhaps, every other terrestrial being.

As a proof of the extraordinary capacity of this truly ingenious little creature, I shall close this article with the account given us by Mr. Marsham of the Ichneumon manifestator.

"On the 9th of June 1787, I discovered this insect setting on the top of an old post, as I was walking in Kensington Gardens, and its peculiar appearance and extraordinary actions led me to observe it attentively. It moved rapidly over the top of the post, having its antennæ bent in the form of an arch, and with a strong vibratory motion, feeling about until it came to a hole made by some insect into which it thrust its antenno quite to the head. It remained a minute at least in this situation, apparently very busy, and then drawing out its antennæ, came round to the exactly opposite side of the hole, again thrust in its antennæ and remained nearly the same time. It next proceeded to one side of the hole, repeating the operation, the antennæ quivering in a surprising manner; and having now again drawn out its antennæ, turned about, and dexterously measuring a proper distance, threw back its abdomen over the head and thorax, at the same time projecting its long and delicate tube into the hole; which when it had accomplished, it brought its body into a direct perpendicular situation, the two sheaths of the tube standing directly upright, as did the abdomen, while the tube itself proceeded from the posterior extremity of the body, down the underside of the abdomen into the hole. This operation was repeated several times. My farther enquiries were for the present interrupted.

"But on the 16th of the same month I again fortunately discovered many of them at work. They appeared to pierce the wood with their tubes which they forced in, even to half their length, supporting and directing them by their hinder legs and thighs. I was so astonished to see an Instrument, apparently weak and slender, able with the strength of so small an animal, to pierce solid wood so deep, that I attended to every motion of the insect, hoping to discover in what manner it was done; and at length observed that all those who appeared to pierce the solid wood did it through the centre of a small white spot resembling mould or mildew, which, with a magnifier, I found to be fine white sand which delicately closed up the hole made by the Apis maxillosa or wood piercer, of which some account has been already given, and wherein were, no doubt young bees deposited. In deep holes that were not closed, the insect not only thrust in the whole tube, but in some cases nearly the whole body, leaving out only the two fore feet and wings, which it placed in contrary directions like two arms. The grooves which inclosed the tube were also projected up the back, with

the ends appearing above the head out of the hole." Mr. Marsham had repeated occasion in the course of seven years, to witness their manouvres, and clearly ascertained that at each penetration of the tube, eggs were deposited, as he had a full opportunity to observe the agitation of the abdomen, necessary to that purpose, whilst the tube was inserted in the opening which must have led to the nest.

(To be Continued.)

FOR THE OBSERVER.

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Mrs. Beatrice Ironside,

I have been much amused by the perusal of the elegant and sublime production of Richard Orum, in the last Observer, and sincerely hope that he may not be too severely *basted,* for his attempt at *roasting* the gentlemen of Baltimore, which attempt appears to have been caused by a desire of revenge for the *boiling* he has suffered during the winter. It is true that "*boiled* with indignation" is not a mal apropos expression for the commencement of an essay upon *dressing,* but we are fearful that Richard cannot claim the merit of originality in this, but must probably have taken a hint from the motto of that whimsical, heterogenious composition of elegance and witticisms, known by the title of Salmagundi ; but R. O. has certainly mistaken the learned Linkum Fidelius (who could never have intended to dress food for the body) and has endeavoured to "treat the town" with a plain boiled dish, and tho' he may be rather *over done,* to a people of an Anthropaphaginian nature he would certainly afford a delicious morsel.

Friend Orum is rather eccentrick, and (in as much as eccentricity gives a claim to originality) rather original in supposing that the costume of a gentleman, can give the lie to professions of love ! Did it ever occur to the most *brilliant fancy* that a blushing fair, in the sweetly agitating moment of a tender declaration of fervent love, her heart almost bursting with a reciprocity of feeling, and eyes striving to repress the glittering tear, could coolly examine whether her Adonis had *straight breeches ?* The beauty of the idea we readily allow, and venture from this single assertion to predict the future greatness of Orum.

As Rhetoricians we must certainly admire—for notwithstanding friend R. O. has violated one of Blairs rules respecting propositions, the beauty of the figure amply compensates for this violation, and one or two of less note, which we rather suppose must have been owing to the carelessness of the printer.

The climax, or as some will say, the anti climax, from "*boots and pantaloons*" to pantaloons and stockings, and from thence to "*footed pantaloons*," is an ascent so gradual that the halt and blind may climb...and then the bold apostrophe to the gods, immediately after the mention of footed pantaloons, has something so happy in its conception, that tho' the blind and halt had better tarry here, they must, with admiration, exclaim, Orum ! thy imagination is omnipotent !

In the continuity of the imagery, fancy presents an antithesis, of a light mixed coat and breeches, with pink stockings ; this also has a happy effect, as it in some measure relieves the mind from the contemplation of the barbarous outrage upon decency, in observing pantaloons with feet, and the multitude of gods introduced by the apostrophe, which united certainly becomes too much for the mind of man.

Sigh no more ye patriotick lovers of American genius ! never let it again be said that our soil is unfavourable to the culture of acuminated genius. When Orum wields the pen, vice must shrink back from the view, and *footed pantaloons* be condemned to eternal oblivion ! Vile boots must even be considered a shocking outrage to the feelings of humanity ; and carnal gratifications, and pantaloons and stockings, meet their due reprehension.

Orum shall hold the balance in his hand, and virtue and breeches, love and pink stockings, commemorate the purity of a Baltimore society.

And now, Oh Orum ! let me pray that the gods you have invoked, may assist you in your arduous task of reformation, and it certainly would become the beaux to see you well *dress'd*.

AMORT.

For the Observer.

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THE CAMELEON.....No. VII.

BY THOMAS FICKLE ESQ.

I think my conduct has sufficiently justified my name and character, and no person hereafter will presume to question that I am whimsical. I have delayed for some time to appear in print because my laziness and variableness of disposition prevented me, and the club, having become rather disorganised, offered me no assistance whatever in the task. However some enquiry having been made concerning my existence and my aunt Prisey, (a good soul) having loudly complained of my caprice, a-serting that many ladies had smiled approbation on my preceding numbers, I have promised to recommence, and be more punctual, and I hope more entertaining for

the future...But let me not defer introducing to your acquaintance, gentle reader, my worthy aunt and agreeable niece, my companions and entertainers, who will make perhaps some figure in my lucubrations.

Miss Priscilla Fickle, or as I have called her from time in memorial, aunt Priscy, has deliberated coolly and dispassionately on marriage, and from her observations and reflections these last forty years, she has wisely concluded all advances that may have been made to her on that score: she often, her eyes glistening with exultation, declares she has refused offers which many would have seized with eagerness. The world, to be sure, is wicked enough to deny to her even having had any admirers, but I positively assert from the information of my father, that she was once addressed by a gentleman of respectability and fortune, whom she discarded for presuming to assert in her presence (as an inducement I suppose to marry him) that old maids were condemned to lead apes in hell; this so offended the delicate ear of my aunt Priscy that she forbid him ever to cast a look of tenderness on her again, and now the very mention of apes causes the *hysterics*. Aunt Priscy is very scrupulous of countenancing any slanderous conversation in her presence, so much so, that she mentions the faults and *faux pas* of her neighbours, only to her *particular* friends, and that with injunctions of the greateit secrecy. Sometimes, indeed, her friends being numerous, they reach the ears of the accused, and she is questioned minutey on the subject, which she always fully explains. She extends her friendly disposition even to the brute creation, and the number of her domestic cats testify her benevolence to that creature in particular. If one be hurt by the negligence of a servant, no matter how high in favour, the poor girl is discharged immediately as devoid of humanity, and unfit to attend on the purity of my aunt Priscy. But genealogy is her forte...she can trace her family within two degrees of *Noah*, and can explain its divisions and subdivisions into *variables, volubles*, &c. with precision and certainty. The whole family respect her highly for this knowledge, and always apply to her heraldic genius for a solution of any difficulty that may occur. When the "Weathercock" was advertised to be acted, the name of *Tristram Fickle* struck her eye, and not being able to divine what degree of consanguinity he bore our family, she determined to be present at the performance of that celebrated farce, though she had not frequented the theatre for many years before. She came home elated, declared Tristram was a first cousin of her father's, and that *Jefferson* acted it inimitably. Her commendation ceased not with her declarations; she commanded all her nephews and nieces to visit the theatre the night of his benefit, for having, as she averred, represented our family in so amiable and whimsical a view. Aunt Priscy loves a good story and often

to our admiration will relate some humourous occurrence which happened to some branch of our family ; for she is a perfect aristocrat, and cannot endure these upstart families, as she terms them. Sometimes, indeed, her narrations are so often repeated, she, kind soul, wishing every visitor to participate in the amusement, that they scarcely force a smile, and I laugh every day at some story which I have listened to these ten years. But the arts in which she chiefly excels and which she continually practises, are phophecy and prediction of future events by dreams. Not an accident happens but what she has foretold, and each morning as she descends to breakfast, we may read in her communicative countenance the events of the day. This happy art should alone immortalize her. Our family was a few weeks since in great consternation. She having dreamt a few nights before that one of her teeth fell out and she was certain some near relation would die. It happily terminated in the death of an old house dog, and our house was once more restored to life. As she had purchased a complete suit of mourning, not to be negligent in paying some respect to the being who was destined to die, she felt chagrined at the ill success of her phophetic spirit, and only waits an occasion to prove the verity of her assertions. But, with all her foibles aunt Priscy, is kind and benevolent. A tale of misfortune never fails to moisten her eye with a tear, the mendicant never departs from the house, dispirited and unrefreshed. In her duty to her maker, she is fervent and punctual, and base envy ever finds an enemy in her bosom. Such is Miss Priscilla Fickle...excuse reader, her foibles...venerate her virtues. One demands your approbation...the other requires your lenity.

As for Miss Maria, you must wait untill my leisure permits me to draw her at full length, and I promise her she shall not suffer, O.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

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BEATRICE IRONSIDE'S BUDGET.

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" To virtuous deeds and liberal arts a friend."

I consider it no less my duty, than I feel it to be the summit of my honourable ambition, to aid, by every means I can devise, the amelioration of manners and the introduction of taste amongst my fellow citizens ; to arouse a spirit for the cultivation of the fine arts, would tend to the glory and honour of our nation ; and in my endeavours to accomplish this laudable end, *truth* shall not yield to servile flattery, nor useful candour be sacrificed to mistaken complaisance.

On this subject, I concluded an article in the last Observer, by saying, that if any one were disposed to enter into a discussion on this important point, neither solid reasons, nor ample materials would be wanting to support and justify what has been said on this topic, with that liberty and energy which the subject demands. A letter which appeared in the Federal Gazette of Tuesday last, will, I flatter myself, serve as a proof of the justice of the preceding articles I have published on this important object. The author of the letter alluded to, in treating the subject with becoming interest and politeness, evidences that he is no less formed for the love of the arts, than he appears to be attached to his country, and it is with pleasure that Mrs. Beatrice takes up the gauntlet thrown by such an adversary.

It appears, in the first place, that the writer of this letter which I am about to analyze, is very far from participating in the severity of my opinion upon the state of taste in the U. States. But I fear that he has not perfectly understood himself, or that desiring to speak truths, and at the same time to palliate them, he has, (as generally happens in such cases) entangled himself in a difficulty not easy to surmount with triumph.

Let us then attend to *An American*, for this is the title by which he has thought proper to make himself known:

"Amidst the din of war which convulses the other quarters of the globe, America, with a steady pace rises towards the proud eminence of wealth and happiness. But there appears to my view yet one thing wanting in the catalogue of our pursuits—high cultivation of the liberal arts. While our system of government is superiour to all competition; in this day, when the spirited enterprise of our successful mercantile fellow-citizens draws such immense wealth to the individual and the national treasuries; and while our ships glide gaily o'er the most distant seas, America is almost unknown in the school of the arts; the brightest geniuses amongst her sons are compelled to seek foreign patronage, and to lodge the choicest fruits of their exalted talents in unknown and strange climes."

But, did the Observer attempt to contend that the *territory* of the United States was not very good? That our commercial enterprizes were not very *fortunate!* Did the Observer deny the "immense wealth of our national and individual *treasuries* and the *mercantile* activity which absorbs all the thinking powers of our nation? No, most indubitably! no one can accuse it of having forgotten these facts! . . . . .

Now, the goodness of the soil of the United States, nor the profits to be made on wares and provisions, was no way in question, when the Observer had occasion to speak of the present state of

the *Genius* of America. This even does not in any manner for part of its plan, for if it had been intended to embrace this *dep ment of literature* at all, it would have been entitled the *P Current*, and not the *Observer*.

However, to return to the letter of an American :

" Do not misunderstand me, sir ; I am not about to join in t ungracious attempt to stigmatise my dear Columbia, as hostile the arts. I will not call her sons Vandals, nor denounce th terrtory as a cold Sibera, where the best plants sicken and di No, I value the intelligence of her citizens at a higher rate, an I esteem her climate and her soil, as of a kinder nature."

But once more, what has the *earth* to do with the spirit of th nation? Does this gentleman believe that thinking beings ar formed of atoms, when he thus continually confounds *matte* with *spirit*. Let us finish his period :

" Yet, permit me, sir, to say, that our progress in refinement is not so great as the unparralelled advances which we have made to luxury and to wealth."

I cry you mercy, zealous champion of Columbia, for you have only repeated what the Observer has not ceased to reiterate. I faithfully transcribe this passage :

" I have witnessed, with no small confusion and regret, the unsuccessful attempt of a respectable artist, to attract even a small share of that patronage and admiration which his talents eminently merit. The paintings of Mr. GROOMBRIDGE, in vain were they exhibited to public and for private examination, while the sensibility of this gentleman was wounded by neglect, and his works valued only for their frames, or admired as six-penny pictures. Mr. G. has the mournful consolation to witness the handsome compliment paid him by a literary friend, in the last Observer, and the mortification of being compelled to withdraw his paintings."

Permit me, sir, to ask, if it was thus you thought to avenge the cause of our *young* Columbia? And if it was by such arguments you expected to make those repent of their sincerity whom you accuse of having *stigmatised* it ! Ha ! I perceive you have for a moment forgotten that reason and truth are one, and that honestly and candidly it is impossible but that fundamentally you must agree with me in all I have advanced upon this point.

Besides, sir, the logic you have employed in your apology, will never persuade any one that that nation which suffers men of genious to expire of inanition and the mortification of contempt, can be gifted with a very *attic* spirit ! .....

You speak, sir, with high praise of Mr. Groombridge ; and the paragraph you have done me the honour to extract from the Observer, sufficiently proves that the talents of this astist, who merits rather better treatment than he receives from our fellow-citizens, were not forgotteu. But for very good reasons I will

again repeat the names of *West*, and of *Trumbull* as painters; and I will add to these that of general *Stewart*, who now does honour to the English army, (1) and I will again ask if it is not a puerile vanity, a real *childishness* to pretend to *appropriate* these men to ourselves, when the *Vaudalism* (2) against which I have claimed, has compelled them to seek for *bread* and distinctions out of our *divine territory*; when, in short, our inconceivable apathy has constrained them to found their glory amongst foreign nations, who have known how to form, and to recompence their talents and their merit.

It is true, that perhaps the advantages which Mr. Latrobe, a celebrated engineer obtains here, will be bro't forward as a triumphant exception; but this would not be a very happy instance, for it is necessary to know the opposition, the outrages, the ill treatment, with which presumption, envy and ignorance have assailed this gentleman, to be able to estimate at what price he has purchased the favour of being surveyor general to the public buildings of the U. States.

This would be an occasion for fixing the attention of my readers, and of all *well disposed persons* of our *Territory*, upon the odious reception which foreigners of talent meet amongst us. I remember some years ago a certain *prince* of Italy, visited us, than whom, heaven be praised, a more insignificant animal never issued from the hand of nature—with no more intrinsic merit than the embroidery he wore, and the cross of Malta that served to make his insignificance conspicuous: well *all republicans* as we are this PRINCE was courted, and sought after, by our patricians, and some amongst us, who pretend to high knowledge, followed this titled *dunce*, as Johnson said of Boswell, like a cannister tied to a dog's tail: I have since *known* men incontestibly of the *first*, yes, the FIRST distinction in point of talent; possessing the *highest polish of manners*; the most honourable, the most irreproachable conduct; these persons have, too been made known to our *enlightened*, our *discerning* patricians; but because their *merits* were unaccompanied by the trappings of wealth, because, in the cause of honour, they had sacrificed those distinctions which alone are appreciated by *narrow minded ignorance*, they are left to the cold silence of neglect and treated with indifference or contempt; O tempora, O mores. Oh! pure *spirit of genuine republicanism*, which prides itself alone, on the distinctions of merit!!!

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(1) It will, perhaps, be recollected, how zealously our public papers claimed general Stewart as an American.

(2) In lamenting that our country is yet in the night of Vandalism, it is necessary to observe that this can only relate to certain points; thus it would be as silly as ridiculous, for malice to pretend to apply for instance to the studies of eloquence, theology, medicine and law, what can relate only to the fine arts.

It would be easy to fill my budget, with many examples; but I will not multiply episodes; and therefore to return to my original subject, I think it my duty before I quit this topic, to make an observation to the author of the letter to which I have before alluded, which appears to me not less important than those already treated.

I will then take the liberty of saying, that in all polemick points, it is wrong to assume names or titles, which preclude freedom of opinion. In adopting the signature of AN AMERICAN, does this writer mean, that all those, who do not take *Philadelphia* for *London*, *New-York* for *Paris*, *Washington* for *Rome*, and *Baltimore* for *Athens*, are unpatriotic citizens, and *stigmatisers* of Columbia! and yet such is the idea which must result from this *signature*; such will be the inference drawn by those weak heads who reason under the influence of self love, and national prejudices, and sometimes of the most ridiculous and meanest envy.

How! does *this American* acknowledge, that we are obliged to send our sons to seek honor, instruction, and rewards in foreign climes; and yet pretend that the advice and information of well informed strangers who visit our territory is not to be attended to, nor tolerated. This consequence necessarily results from the title of an *American* which he has appropriated to himself; as if to render all those liable to the imputation of want of patriotism, who do not sufficiently humble themselves before the *idol* of conceit and *self-sufficiency*.

I shall conclude my budget, (in which I have been far from intending to say any thing unpleasant to the author, whose letter I have considered) with recalling an idea, which has for some time engaged the attention of all *real* friends to America. And I repeat with them, that far from compromising with our defects, we must have the courage to view them as they are; and that to triumph over the errours which vanity engenders, and to escape from the gloom of ignorance, we must do as all those nations have done who have been ambitious to excel, we must establish *public academies*...welcome amongst us all learned men and artists of whatever country...and endeavour to attach to us distinguished professors of every kind...we must give to our government the necessary means of acting in this respect, so as to promote the name and the glory of our nation. It will be then only we shall be entitled to feel offended when we are considered as Carthaginians or Beotians. But it will be then only, and when our first citizens know how to set the example and fashion on this point, as they now know so well how to do it luxury, (as has been observed by our American) that artists will no longer be obliged to send their master-pieces to auction, like so much tallow or molasses, and that they will no longer be exposed to the anguish and mortification of not procuring, even by these degrading means, the humblest price for their labours.

For the Observer.

HISTORICAL EPHEMERIS.

27th of June, 1391...died Spinello, a native of Arezzo, and one of the first whose efforts contributed to revive the art of painting in Italy. His catastrophe was curious enough. He had painted the arch angel Michael precipitating Lucifer, and the rebel angels from heaven. He exerted himself so much to give fire to his composition, that having dreamt the devil came and asked him why he had made him so hideous, and swore on the *faith of a dæmon* to be avenged of the affront, poor Spinello never got over his fright, and died a short time afterwards, without having recovered his reason.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

It is impossible to publish the multitude of replies which have been sent to Mr. Orum. This gentleman, it is true, need not have suffered such high indignation to take possession of him at the indignity offered to the fair ones of Baltimore...for the attention of the ladies must be so entirely engrossed in admiring the brilliancy and *high accomplishments* of the *heads* of our beaux, we suppose they do not often think of the decorations of their *heels*.

ERRATA.

In 25, page 293, line 15, for Neckar, read Necker. Page 395, in the Latin quotation from Horace, for ara cruare, read *ora cruore*.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

Say, lovely maid, with head relining,
In mood of saddest sorrowing woe!
Ah! what can cause such sad repining,
Or bid those pearly tears to flow.

Those orbs which once but pleasure beaming,
Now shed alone a deadly pale;
That cheek with sorrow's tribute streaming,
Alas bespeaks a dreadful tale.

Ah! why that form depict'd with anguish,
Where late but joy and beauty shone;
Perhaps for some false heart you languish,
Perhaps by that false heart undone!

Curs'd be the man whose wiles ensnaring,
Could wrong a heart so soft as thine;
May he at last of bliss despairing,
Plead in vain at mercy's shrine.

Oh! maid of grief, thy sighs give over,
Ah! sink not thus in dread despair,
For know he robs his breast for ever.
Of bliss who wrongs one virtuous fair.

END OF VOLUME I.

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